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Transcription of my spoken testimony yesterday:

My name is Alex Manwaring; I'm a junior political science major at Trinity College and actually an intern here at the capitol as well for Representative Matthew Ritter. I am testifying today in support of HB 7052. Increased transparency and accountability are two major things that I am extremely passionate about and that I talk about all the time in our internship program over at Trinity. I've actually done some research on the issue. There was a study done, called Looking Beyond the Incumbent: Exposing Corruption and the Effect on Electoral Outcomes, done by Alberto Chong from Ottawa University, Ana De Lao from Yale, Dean Karlin from Yale, and Leonard Wantchekon from Princeton University. This study looked into corruption and the effect that it has on voter turnout and trust in the government, and one of the biggest things it found is that it undermines the credibility of politicians and makes it harder to do their job. What it found was that "when corruption reaches a certain point, citizens find that only a political challenger who is not already deeply embroiled in and compromised by ongoing corrupt transactions offers a credible prospect for better governance...once corruption reaches a certain level, voters may interpret it as an equilibrium from which individual politicians, especially low quality ones cannot credibly withdraw" (Looking Beyond the Incumbent: Exposing Corruption and the Effect on Electoral Outcomes). So then any challenger, they're assuming, who is interested in doing that work must also be corrupt themselves or also inclined to corruption. And while I do agree that in theory, if more information is provided, and that we should give voters their choice; low-information voting is a harsh reality. Most people don't like to talk about it; political apathy is very real. When I try to talk to kids my age, or even adults and many people older, they say 'Oh, nothing's going to change...I don't want to talk about that...It's always going to be the same.' And I don't think that's right because I am passionate about politics and it's something that I'd like to get involved in and like was mentioned earlier; there's malpractice for doctors and lawyers. So I think that there needs to be accountability for politicians especially when they are supposed to be serving the public and the public's best interest. While in theory, yeah if you just put the information out there and just let the public make their best choice, these community organizers might be friends with the people who are trying to garner their support, so they tell them what to do. Or the media; it's very profit-driven and they want to re-affirm people's beliefs rather than challenge them because at the end of the day they are trying to make money. The average citizen isn't going to take the time to do this, and if we don't take measures to make sure that politicians are held accountable, then we'll keep having the wool pulled over our eyes and things won't get better for civil servants or the public. I think it's in both of their interests to favorably report on this bill, and I will take any questions.?